

COVID-19 Guidance for Food Establishments



General information

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. There are many types of human coronaviruses, including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. Currently, there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of COVID-19. COVID-19 is a new disease caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.

How you can help prevent the spread of COVID-19

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyday preventive actions for everyone (see [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)), including service industry workers and customers:

- Practice social distancing by maintaining a minimum of 6 feet distance from others when possible.
- Wear cloth face coverings in public settings (medical masks and N-95 respirators are reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders). CDC has additional information on the use of face coverings, including washing instructions and instructions on [how to make homemade face covers](#).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home

In addition to your employee health policy excluding or restricting food handlers with vomiting, diarrhea, fever with a sore throat, infected wounds on the hands and arms, and jaundice, consider using the [COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire](#) and watch for the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to notify their supervisor, stay home, and follow CDC's "[What to Do if You Are Sick](#)" guidelines.

Employees should not come to work until:

- No fever for at least three days (72 hours) without the use of medicine that reduces fever; **AND**
- Other symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath have improved; **AND**
- At least seven days have passed since the first symptoms appeared.

Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work. Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.

Food establishments should review [CDC's interim guidance for businesses and employers](#) for planning and responding to COVID-19 and the FDA's [Retail Food Protection: Employee Health and Personal Hygiene Handbook](#).

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Perform routine cleaning and disinfection

Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Prior to disinfection, clean using soap and water. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, contact time, personal protective equipment requirements, proper ventilation, etc.). Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.

For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

- Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses if appropriate for the surface when properly diluted. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water, *OR*
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
- Products on the EPA's List N, when used as directed, are expected to be effective against the virus that causes COVID-19. Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations "[Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)" using a disinfectant on the EPA's [List N](#).

CDC recommends routine disinfection of all high-touch surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, doorknobs, electronics, pens, refrigerator/freezer door handles, and restrooms. The CDC recommends specific cleaning and disinfection for areas people with suspected or with confirmed COVID-19 have visited, see the "[Guidance for Food Establishments Post COVID-19 exposure by Ill Employees](#)." **After disinfection-level chemicals are used on food contact surfaces, they must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized with chemicals and concentrations approved for food contact surfaces.**

Food Handler Safety Training Card

In an effort to increase social distancing as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food Handler Safety Training Card (Health Card) program is suspended until May 1, 2020. Food Handlers will not be required to have their cards with them, and new employees or employees that need to renew their cards will be able to temporarily work without cards.

Links

SNHD Coronavirus Information and Messaging

Targeted at Food Facilities

www.snhd.info/ferl/covid19

General information

CDC: www.cdc.gov/covid-19

FDA: www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19

SNHD: www.snhd.info/coronavirus

Guidance for businesses and employers

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

Cleaning and disinfection recommendations

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

****This shall remain in effect until April 30, 2020, unless renewed by a subsequent Directive****